

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7753

S E C R E T SEOUL 0062

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS CINCPAC

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS KS

SUBJECT: SALES OF F4DS AND THIRD COUNTRY PURCHASES

REF: A STATE 284413 B STATE 001812

1. SUMMARY: IN FOLLOW-UP OF MEETINGS WITH MND (REPORTED SEPTTEL), AMBASSADOR MET JANUARY SEVEN WITH PRIME MINISTER KIM CHONG PIL ON F4D DECISION AND THIRD COUNTRY PURCHASES. GOOD RESPONSE ON FRDS BUT PROBLEMS REMAIN ON EXOCET. END SUMMARY.

2. AMBASSADOR REVIEWED FOR PRIMIN DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN DECISION ON F4DS AND DESIRE FOR SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION OF REHABILITATION COSTS FOR F5AS. PRIMIN, WHO FULLY BRIEFED ON PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS WITH MND, EXPRESSED GREAT APPRECIATION FOR US DECISION ON F4DS. HE SAID THERE HAD ALREADY BEEN HIGH LEVEL DISCUSSIONS ON PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN REHABILITATION COSTS. ROK OFFICIALS APPRECIATED SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES FACED IN VIETNAM AND RECOGNIZED PROBLEMS FOR USAF IN SELLING F4DS TO KOREA. AS RESULT, PRIMIN WAS PREPARED TO STRONGLY RECOMMEND TO THE PRESIDENT THAT ROK TAKE ACTION WHICH WOULD BE HELPFUL TO VIETNAM, ALTHOUGH DIRECT PAYMENT OF REHABILITATION COSTS MAY NOT BE FEASIBLE. PRIMIN WAS NOT SPECIFIC ON WHAT ACTIONS WOULD BE TAKEN BUT INDICATED THEY WOULD BE IN THE LINE OF PROVIDING EQUIVALENT AMOUNT

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OF POL AND AMMUNITION OR OTHER ITEMS AS DISCUSSED WITH MND.

3. PRIMIN ALSO ASKED ABOUT FURTHER PURCHASE OF F4E SWUADRON AS WELL AS MENTIONING THAT FIRM DECISION NOW TAKEN BY ROKG TO UNDERTAKE CO-PRODUCTION OF F5ES. AMBASSADOR RESPONDED ALONG LINES PARA 4 REFTEL A, BUT URGED THAT ROKG HOLD OFF FINAL DECISION ON F4ES UNTIL RESULTS OF YF COMPETITION COMPLETED. HE POINTED OUT HIGH COST OF F4ES AND STRONG LIKELIHOOD THAT YF AIRCRAFT MIGHT BE MORE ECONOMICA FROM ROK VIEWPOINT. PRIMIN AGREED THAT F4E DECISION COULD BE DELAYED FOR PRESENT.

4. AMBASSADOR ALSO MADE VERY STRONG APPROACH FOR THIRD COUNTRY PURCHASES PER REFTEL B. HE URGED DELAY IN FINAL DECISION STRESSING MOST SERIOUS CONCERN IN WASHINGTON ON BOTH EXOCET PURCHASE AND SUBMARINES. HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT EFFORTS BEING MADE TO SEEK EARLY HARPOON DELIVERY WHICH WOULD MEET ROK SCHEDULE, ALTHOUGH NO FINAL WORD AS YET.

5. PRIMIN INDICATED PRESIDENT PARK HAD DECIDED THAT EXOCET WOULD BE PURCHASED GIVEN TWO-YEAR GAP IN DELIVERIES OF HARPOON. FRENCH NEGOTIATING TEAM HAD ALREADY ARRIVED JANUARY SIX FOR NEGOTIATIONS. AMBASSADOR PRESSED VERY HARD FOR DELAYING FINAL DECISIONS UNTIL FURTHER WORD RECEIVED ON HARPOON DELIVERIES. IN EFFORT STAVE OFF DECISION, HE SUGGESTED THAT QUESTION OF EXOCET BE FULLY REVIEWED DURING NEXT WEEKS'S VISIT OF UNDER SECRETARY MAW. PRIMIN AGREED, ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY HE UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM PRESIDENT PARK TO COMPLETE PURCHASE NEGOTIATIONS OF EXOCET.

6. COMMENT: PROSPECTS FOR OBTAINING SOME ASSISTANCE FOR THE VIETNAM PROGRAM LOOKED REASONABLY GOOD, ALTHOUGH NOT AS DIRECT CASH PAYMENT OF 4.1 MILLION DOLLARS REHABILITATION COSTS. ASSUMING THAT THIS AGREEABLE TO WASHINGTON, WE WILL PRESS FOR EQUIVALENT AMOUNT IN AMMUNITION AND OTHER ITEMS IN ROK RESERVES. ON OTHER HAND, EXOCET PURCHASE IS VERY FAR DOWN THE ROAD. WOULD STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE BE DONE TO PROVIDE EARLY HARPOON DELIVERY IN 1976 KEYED TO PSSM COMPLETION, AND  
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THAT SUCH AN OFFER BE MADE IN CONTEXT OF UNDER SECRETARY MAW'S VISIT. THIS APPROACH SEEMS TO HAVE MOST FEASIBLE PROSPECT OF HOLDING OFF FINAL EXOCET DECISION.  
SNEIDER

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCPAC.

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